

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
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R 080858Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0214
INFO AMEMBASSY SEOUL
AMEMBASSY TAIPEI
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
USLO PEKING
CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 14285

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: JA, KS, PEPR
SUBJECT: JAPAN-KOREA RELATIONS: SEPTEMBER MINISTERIALS

REF: A. TOKYO 11595; B. TOKYO A-153, JUNE 12, 1978

1. SUMMARY: GOJ EXPECTS SEPTEMBER 3-4 JAPAN-KOREA
MINISTERIAL MEETINGS TO BE RELATIVELY SMOOTH EXERCISE,
DESPITE POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS RELATING TO TAKESHIMA/DOK TO.
JAPANESE SIDE IS CAUTIOUSLY HOPEFUL THAT PERIOD OF TRANQUIL-
LITY IN BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP CAN BE EXTENDED. END
SUMMARY.

2. IN CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF AUGUST 7, NORTHEAST ASIA
DIVDIR SATO SAID MOFA WAS BEGINNING DETAILED PREPARATIONS
FOR JAPAN-KOREA MINISTERIAL MEETING NOW SCHEDULED FOR
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SUNDAY AND MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 3-4 (ONLY DATES MUTUALLY
AGREEABLE PRIOR TO SONODA'S SEPTEMBER 5 DEPARTURE WITH
PRIME MINISTER TO MIDDLE EAST). JAPANESE DELEGATION TO
SEOUL MEETING WILL INCLUDE, IN ADDITION TO SONODA,
MINISTERS OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND INDUSTRY, FINANCE,
AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES, AND ECONOMIC PLANNING AGENCY.
KOREANS HAD WANTED EXTERNAL ECONOMIC AFFAIRS MINISTER

USHIBA TO ATTEND BUT JAPANESE, NOT WISHING TO GIVE UNNECESSARY PROMINENCE TO TRADE PROBLEM AND IN VIEW OF ATTENDANCE OF OTHER ECONOMIC MINISTERS, DECLINED.

3. SATO SAID DISCUSSION OF AGENDA WOULD TAKE PLACE AT WORKING LEVEL IN NEXT FEW DAYS. HE EXPECTED THAT, WITH CONTINENTAL SHELF LEGISLATION OUT OF WAY, MAIN ISSUE KOREANS WOULD WANT TO RAISE WOULD BE TRADE IMBALANCE. SATO SAID ROK WAS NOW PROJECTING \$3 BILLION DEFICIT IN ITS TRADE WITH JAPAN FOR CY 1978. THERE WOULD OF COURSE ALSO BE REVIEW OF SITUATION ON PENINSULA, WHICH SATO ASSUMED WOULD INCLUDE DISCUSSION OF ROK SECURITY, NORTH-SOUTH RELATIONS, AND PROSPECTS FOR EASING TENSIONS. SATO OBSERVED THAT WHILE SECURITY ASPECTS OF MINISTERIAL DISCUSSIONS MIGHT BE SOMEWHAT MORE WIDE-RANGING THAN IN PAST, THEY UNDOUBTEDLY WOULD REMAIN MORE INHIBITED THAN KOREAN SIDE WOULD PREFER OR MIGHT EXPECT. HE THOUGHT KOREANS TENDED TO READ TOO MUCH INTO DEVELOPMENTS IN PUBLIC DEBATE OF DEFENSE ISSUES NOW TAKING PLACE IN JAPAN, AND OVERESTIMATED DEGREE AND PACE OF ATTITUDINAL CHANGES.

4. SATO SAID SONODA WAS DETERMINED TO RAISE TAKESHIMA/DOK TO AT MINISTERIALS, SINCE HE HAD VIRTUALLY COMMITTED HIMSELF TO DO SO DURING DIET DEBATE OF CONTINENTAL-SHELF LEGISLATION. ROK REMAINED OPPOSED TO DISCUSSION. AS RESULT, TAKESHIMA/DOK TO WOULD NOT BE ON FORMAL AGENDA, BUT KOREANS HAD AGREED THAT IT COULD BE TAKEN UP "INFORMAL-CONFIDENTIAL

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LY" BY FOREIGN MINISTERS AT SOME POINT DURING TWO-DAY MEETING. SONODA WOULD BE ARMED WITH "FIRM BUT FRIENDLY" TALKING POINTS ASSERTING JAPANESE SOVEREIGNTY "WITHIN CONTEXT OF NEED TO MAINTAIN GOOD RELATIONS WITH ROK."

5. ASSUMING TAKESHIMA/DOK TO QUESTION COULD BE RAISED WITHOUT DISTURBING ATMOSPHERE, SATO THOUGHT MINISTERIAL WOULD PROVE LOW-KEY AND UNEVENTFUL. AT SAME TIME, GOJ DID NOT REGARD IT AS AN INSIGNIFICANT EXERCISE. ON CONTRARY, WITH CONTINENTAL-SHELF IMPLEMENTING LEGISLATION REMOVED AS COMPLICATING FACTOR, MINISTERIAL COULD IN SENSE MARK BEGINNING OF NEW ERA IN RELATIONSHIP IN WHICH RECOGNITION OF COMMON INTERESTS MIGHT OUTWEIGH OFTEN DIVISIVE EMOTIONAL CONSIDERATIONS OF PAST. SATO NOTED THAT PARK HAD JUST BEEN CONFIRMED FOR ANOTHER SIX YEARS IN POWER, BARRING UNFORESEEN EVENTS, AND SAID HE WAS CLEARLY "BEST CHOICE FOR JAPAN." IF STABILITY COULD BE SUSTAINED, THESE NEXT SIX YEARS COULD BE PRODUCTIVE PERIOD FOR JAPAN AND KOREA, IN WHICH GENUINELY MATURE RELATIONSHIP COULD BE CONSTRUCTED. MAJOR POTENTIAL OBSTACLE TO IMPROVED TIES WOULD CONTINUE TO BE PARK GOVERNMENT'S DOMESTIC POLICIES, I.E., HUMAN RIGHTS. SATO NOTED IN THIS REGARD THAT KIM DAE JUNG KID-

NAPPING WAS ONCE AGAIN FOCUS OF CONSIDERABLE PRESS ATTENTION
HERE IN CONNECTION WITH FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF THAT EVENT.
MANSFIELD

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